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Spiritan

Haiti

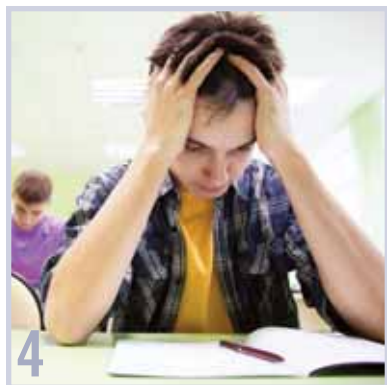
Two years after
the earthquake

Rescuing underachieving boys

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Why do mission in Asia?

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Church Leadership

Pat Fitzpatrick CSSp

“See everything. Overlook much. Correct a little.”

— Pope John XXIII, the wise old man of Vatican II

New Pope — new leadership?

Church leadership — shepherds in Galilee, Samaria and Bethlehem come to mind.

On the Mount of Beatitudes a shepherd led his flock of sheep and goats by walking ahead of them, leading them to pasture someplace else.

In Samaria a shepherd stood surrounded by his sheep and goats, allowing them to graze and be nourished.

Near Bethlehem, at midday, one shepherd stood in the shade of some olive trees, a second squatted nearby asleep — encouraging the sheep to rest in the shade from the noonday sun.

Leadership — shepherding — knowing what it is time for — knowing the needs of the flock — keeping watch.

Leadership speaks to our hopes and needs, to what we long to be and what we know is right. It has been described as “the ability to walk confidently in the dark” in some definite direction — unlike Don Quixote who jumped on his horse and galloped off in all directions.

A Christ-like leader

“The top-of-the-pyramid image of leadership is of little use ... The purpose of leadership is service: the leader is an enabler who empowers and releases potential in a follower ... ‘The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.’” *William Byron S.J.*

At the Last Supper Jesus said to his disciples: “I, your Lord and Master, am among you as one who serves.” Then he took off his outer garment, tied a towel around his waist, got a basin and some water — and washed and dried his disciples’ feet one by one. Servant leadership.

The Christ-like leader might be compared to a Lookout, an Interpreter, a Weaver.

The Lookout sees the total picture and hears what’s going on. “*You can observe a lot by looking.*” Yogi Berra

The Interpreter has his finger on the pulse of life, makes sense of what is happening, knows what to lament, what to correct and what to celebrate.

The Weaver interlaces different threads into a colourful tapestry.

Leading by example

“Every leader who cares about people is taught by them how to become the leader they need. Leadership is most often a response to the questions and needs of people rather than an initiative designed by an individual leader for the supposed benefit of a community at large.” *Anthony Padovano*

Jesus didn’t come with a series of lectures on life. He didn’t propose a philosophy of life. He didn’t write a book on the meaning of life.

He went from village to village. He met people where they were. In his storytelling he made connections between their day-to-day lives and God. He attended to their needs. He fed their hunger. He healed their sick ones. He invited them to find God in the events of their lives.

“*The Church needs to become a little more tolerant, accessible, welcoming, compassionate. All the things that, for many people, it is not.*” Bishop Kieran Conry, Arundel and Brighton

Vision and courage

“Nothing we do is complete ... No statement says all that could be said ... No set of goals and objectives includes everything ... We plant the seeds that one day will grow. We water seeds already planted. We lay foundations that will need further development.” *Archbishop Oscar Romero*

Our time calls for a leader with vision — down among his community, meeting with them, listening to them. In giving us two ears and two eyes, but one tongue, did God mean us to listen and look twice as much as talk?

Our time calls for a leader with courage — the courage to keep going, to pick ourselves up after a fall. The sower parable summarizes Jesus’ life: much of what he sowed fell on either the footpath, or rocky ground, or among thorns and brambles and produced nothing. Yet year after year he went back out again to sow more seed. The good ground, the good soil made all the losses tolerable. Failures along the way — yes, but a harvest too.

“*Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*” Serenity Prayer ■

Girls achieve, boys underachieve

Evan Boudreau

Education is for girls, or at least that's how the majority of young boys see it, says Jim Brown.

Brown, a graduate of Neil McNeil High School, is a former Director of Education for the Huron-Perth and the Hastings Prince Edward Catholic District School Boards. He has published his findings in *Rescuing Our Underachieving Sons*.

"Many elementary schools are entirely staffed by women and the majority of secondary school teachers are now women," said Brown. "One of the reasons for the push for affirmative action for female teachers at the secondary level was that when girls got to secondary school, they no longer identified education as something that women did because virtually all the teachers were men.

"Now that the situation is reversed, ... (boys) see education and schooling as something that little girls do."

Economic repercussions

Brown argues that this mentality will have a negative effect upon the Canadian economy. With boys lacking a gender-relevant connection to education, many will end up as basic high school graduates — if even that. The result will be many going on to high risk, low paying jobs.

There's data to support this concern, said Brown, who retired with 40 years experience as a professional educator. According to Statistics Canada — in 1972, men dominated university campuses, representing about 75% of the undergraduate student body. Fast forward to 2008 and the male undergraduate population now stands at 45%.

"The good news is we've helped girls to become achievers. The bad news is the unintended consequences that we've driven boys to be underachievers — meaning that they are not achieving to their potential," said Brown. "Once you've discouraged boys from pursuing advanced education, you now lose that pool of talent. It has economic repercussions for the whole country just as not educating girls had in the past."

To highlight these repercussions Brown points to veterinary medicine, a field once almost entirely dominated by men, but now almost exclusively pursued by women. Brown stressed that the problem isn't that women are being employed in a

non-traditional field, rather, they are changing the traditional role of that profession.

The traditional role of veterinarians was to assist farmers with the health of their livestock, such as birthing calves with average birth-weight between 30 and 45 kilograms. But female veterinarians tend to shy away from such work, preferring to work on smaller domestic pets. Thus, the number of livestock health care specialists has decreased. By applying the rule of supply and demand it is easy to see that fewer livestock veterinarians means higher costs for farmers, leading to higher prices for their commodities, which are in turn passed on at the supermarket checkout.



“The problem is fixable — but we need to start now to see a change 15 years from now.”

While females are encouraged to take on non-traditional roles, even by Brown, boys are not awarded the same support which is why they tend to flood those high risk, lower paying jobs where job security is scarce.

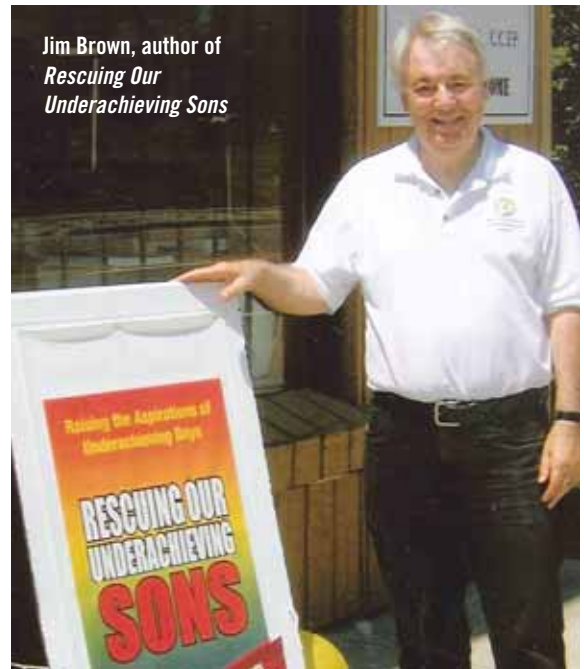
A fixable problem

“Girls have always been encouraged to engage in boy activities, but boys have always been laughed at if they engaged in girl activities,” he said.

But it’s not an irreversible trend, said Brown.

“The problem is fixable — but we need to start now to see a change 15 years from now. We need to start helping parents make minor changes in what they do that will help children before they go to school. Then we need to do something a little different when they arrive at school — not phenomenally different, and then that needs to continue through the school system.”

For parents, Brown said the answer is simple. Buy their sons books, not hockey sticks and basketballs. He said boys



arrive at school on average six months behind the reading level of their female counterparts — a direct correlation to the number of books parents buy their daughters compared to their sons — about ten times more for girls. He added that parents also tend to read more frequently to their daughters, which develops a bond between child and books.

Only one response

Since publishing the book in August 2011, Brown has tried to get it into the hands of every Director of Education in the Catholic system, as well as distribute supplementary material to the Catholic Supervisory Officers and other Board staff with the cost coming out of his own pocket. The only response came from the Dufferin-Peel Board.

He has also attempted to contact Trustees Associations to have them acknowledge the issue. But Brown said he has been rebuked, hearing that it was not part of their mandate.

“The difficulty I have is getting in the door. As a former educator the tendency is to say we don’t have a problem ... and if we do we can solve it,” he said. “That worries me a bit from the point of view of a social justice issue. I have not had a lot of success with the Catholic Boards. However, when I talk to the Public School Boards ... I get calls back from the directors saying, ‘We’d be happy to have you work with our schools.’”

A possible reason for this, Brown believes, is that many of those holding high-ranking positions at the Catholic School Boards were employed during the period of affirmative action. Thus they are unlikely to now admit that a program they supported, and because of which possibly received a job, needs to be fixed. ■

Courtesy of *Catholic Register*.





What's in a word?

“Evangelization.” French speakers would spot the word “évangile” — their word for gospel — among its first three syllables. English speakers would recall the Four Evangelists — Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Evangelization and gospel go hand in hand. Unfortunately, Evangelization and current church priorities sometimes go separate ways.

Those who write about Mission choose the word “Evangelization” to describe what missionaries are sent to do, usually overseas: proclaim the person of Jesus, his teachings, his mission.

Today we’re called to a New Evangelization, not only overseas, but also here at home. We’re called to reawaken a taste for religion in our very secularized cultures. Mission is everywhere today. The ‘home to overseas’ approach is no longer the sole missionary focus.

Start with people

A song from *The Sound of Music* encourages us. Maria is teaching the Von Trapp children to sing: “Let’s start at the very beginning, It’s a very good place to start.” Taking her advice to heart, evangelization starts with people, not with textbooks, not with liturgy, not with theology.

Get to know the people. Speak their language. Connect to their daily lives. Read the gospels to discover how Jesus connected to the people of his time, how he used examples drawn from their day-to-day activities, how he compared the action and presence of God to events in their lives. He chose very

ordinary apostles. He really brought God down to earth. He made God very approachable.

Let’s go back thirty-eight years and take to heart the words of Pope Paul VI: “Evangelizing is the Church’s deepest identity. She exists in order to evangelize.” In his 1975 encyclical on *Evangelization in the Modern World* he wrote: “Evangelization will not be effective a) if it does not take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed, b) if it does not use their language, their signs and symbols, c) if it does not answer the questions they ask, d) if it does not have an impact on their concrete lives.”

For the last thirty-eight years Pope Paul’s encyclical has remained a key document among missionaries and those who wish to understand the church’s missionary outreach. The modern world has changed since its publication, but its insights are as valid now as when they were first written.

The language used to describe evangelization can get very technical: there is *primary evangelization* — the mission or outreach to those who do not believe in Christ; *re-evangelization* of those in previously Christian regions or those in the church who have been baptized but are not ‘practicing Catholics’; and then *the new evangelization* — outreach to those who grew up churchied, but who never really bought into what Christ or Christianity mean.

Fr Ron Rolheiser describes them as follows: “[They] are Christian in name, come from Christian backgrounds, are

familiar with Christianity, believe that they know and understand Christianity, but no longer practice that faith in a meaningful way ... Their attitude towards Christianity, in essence is: I know what it is. I've tried it. And it's not for me."

A motley crew

Jesus started with the ordinary people of his day. He had no doubts about what his mission, his purpose on earth, was: "I must proclaim the Good News of the kingdom of God. That is what I was sent to do." To help him, to make sure his work would continue when he was no longer around, he gathered a somewhat motley crew, invited them to travel around with him, see him in action, listen to his teaching and 'pick up his moves'. Then he sent them out in pairs, on their practise mission. They returned very pleased with themselves — only to hear him say, "You've made a good beginning — but there's more to come." Bit by bit, they began to discover what it meant to be "missionaries", to be sent "to transform humanity from within and make it new." (Pope Paul VI)

That transformation didn't happen just through word of mouth and formal lessons. It happened above all through the witness of the early Christians' lives: Why were they like this? Why did they live in this way? What or who inspired them? Why had they come among us?

Mission and missionaries give of their energy towards liberating people from whatever keeps them on the margin of life: famine, illiteracy, chronic diseases, poverty, injustice, colonialism. Evangelization and liberation are the two hands of missionary activity.

Don't just tell me. Show me

Pope Paul's famous words are as true today as when he first said them: "Modern men and women listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses." Don't just tell me. Show me. Live what you preach.

The Pope went on to say, "Modern men and women are sated by talk, they are tired of listening to words. They want to see words made flesh, words in action, words lived out."

Had he read Hamlet's advice to the actors: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action"?

The missionary's task is to absorb the Gospel message and transpose it into the languages of different peoples, different ages, different cultures and backgrounds. The resulting church communities will take on different external expressions in different parts of the world without betraying the gospel truth.

Under the action of the Holy Spirit

Evangelization will never be possible without the action of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit descended on Jesus at the moment of

his baptism. "Led by the Spirit ... in the power of the Spirit" he began his preaching in Nazareth, applying to himself the passage of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me." Later, as the risen Christ he commissioned them to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Techniques of evangelization are good, but unless they are open to the sometimes gentle, sometimes vibrant action of the Spirit of the Lord they will not proclaim the gospel. It is not by chance that the great missionary inauguration took place on the morning of Pentecost, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

Let's picture it happening: "*When Pentecost had come they were all together in one place. And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of*



"Use their language, their signs and symbols ... answer the questions they ask ... have an impact on their concrete lives."

them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability."

The evangelizers

What's in a word? If the word is "evangelization" the answer given by Pope Paul VI thirty five years ago continues to challenge our church today: "Take into consideration the actual people to whom it is addressed ... use their language, their signs and symbols ... answer the questions they ask ... have an impact on their concrete lives."

Bernadette Gasslein got it right: "To cross our fingers and hope that the same cultural and religious resources that existed fifty years ago, and promoted evangelization in families then, exist today ... is simply unrealistic." (*Celebrate*, March-April 2009).

The present century thirsts for authenticity. Young people especially have a horror of the phony. In their search for truth and honesty they call out, "Don't just tell me. Show me."

More of the same will no longer "cut it". Our church in general and our missionaries in particular are being told, "Believe what you proclaim, live what you believe, proclaim what you live."

Led by a new Pope, is it too much to hope for a new evangelization? ■

Why do mission in Asia?

Kevin Gallagher



The question hit me with force one February day on a cold and wet Taiwan railway platform. A simple enough question from a Spiritan missionary. You would imagine that after my twenty-two years in Taiwan I would be overflowing with words, opinions and suggestions, bursting forth with creative ideas in response to his key question: Why do mission in Asia?

However, the silence I confronted when trying to find words to answer with real honesty was not quite what I expected. We have to dig deep into ourselves to reach those places where the real answers lie.

Let's not avoid the question "Why do mission in Asia?" Are we not preaching to a continent full of ancient cultural riches, mysticism and philosophies? Why bother?

In the Asian context of revealed truths we must be honest and admit that Jesus was a little bit late on the scene. But just because we may have a deep respect for the truth of other religions should not stop us from presenting the case for our own.



Photos by Jean-Pascal Lombart CSSp

The words "mission" and "missionary" have slightly negative connotations in the modern world. But a man came on this earth 2,000 years ago to stand with the oppressed and speak out against oppression. Why is it in vogue to admit to one's Buddhist beliefs at some fashionable party, but to be thought of as strange when standing up for Christianity?

Concepts such as unconditional forgiveness, a personal God who resides among those who are most rejected, the idea of us all being brothers and sisters, can be quite alien to many living in Asia. The Christian message of walking with the poor and dispossessed — not just as a charitable act towards the less fortunate, but also because such actions bring us meaning in our lives and peace for our souls — may be very radical. But it is so life-giving that, in my opinion, how can such a message not be proclaimed to others irrespective of where

they live and what cultural background they may have. These Christian concepts resonate at such a deep place within our common humanity that they provide a very powerful liberating influence irrespective of nationality.

Why do mission at all?

Take the example of Taiwan: where would the migrant workers go for help when they are mistreated, who would go and live with the aboriginal people in the mountains, who would offer shelter to abused foreign brides and who would dare work closely among those with AIDS?

These are the wonderful and powerful material things missionaries are doing, these are the things that show the beauty and closeness of God to us — a God of the poor and the downtrodden. These are the things that in a wonderful and mysterious paradox show us where we can find our own lives.

The practical side to missionary work, the concrete acts of compassion are necessary — but they are not the whole picture. What lies behind these acts of love? What makes the missionary travel from so far to carry out these compassionate activities, and carry them out with such joy?

To discover that to be truly human
is to be truly divine is such an enriching
message that it must be shared with
all who care to listen.

What drives the missionary?

The missionary brings a message that God is alive, not in some obscure above-and-beyond place, or in some tree or plant, but alive in us personally, alive in the world and especially alive on the margins of life with those who are most rejected.

This message of a God who resides within us and is concerned for our welfare, can be radically different to many Asian religious beliefs. But as this Christian message is so life-giving and so deeply integrated with pure and simple human liberation, it is a message that must be shared in friendship with those who have not heard it. To discover that to be truly human is to be truly divine is such an enriching message that it must be shared with all who care to listen — and be a major reason why we should never stop doing mission in Asia.

Christianity also offers a gentle challenge to the darkest areas of ancient traditions which have perhaps reached a point of stagnation and which struggle to integrate with the modern world. With a firm basis in personal friendships, the missionary is able to shine some light on to those areas and offer opportunities not for condemnation of the resident culture, but for its transformation. The light they bring should offer



new possibilities and new insights into what might appear as intransigent and stifling cultural traditions.

Missionaries come to stay

And don't forget that missionaries are rewarded with far more than they give. The missionary is not someone who is here for a good time, to enjoy the warm sunshine, cheap food and wine, and go home with a suitcase full of gifts from afar. Missionaries are people who come to stay.

In believing we are bringing something to the host country, we also believe that we are receiving and that the change in us will be beneficial to the country that is sending us.

In some ways the "Why do mission in Asia?" question does not have to be fully answered. There must be some inherent mystery, something about doing mission, that just does not

make sense with regard to standard values. Seeing a person or group from far away doing things beyond conventional social wisdom, and doing it joyfully, stands in itself as a witness to something beyond the rational material values of life.

If I were to choose one reason for doing mission in Asia it would be for Christianity's strong message of simple human liberation that I would say, "How can we *not* do mission in Asia?" ■

Twenty-two years ago, Kevin Gallagher, originally from Scotland, left an engineering design position for a two-year volunteer position among the mentally disabled in Taiwan. Along the way he and two Taiwanese friends started an association to help the disabled get back into the life of society. Fluent in Chinese, Kevin is married to a Taiwanese lady who is a special education teacher.

Used with permission. *Spiritan Horizons*, Duquesne University Fall 2012

A week in the life of the Spiritan Vietnam Novitiate

Dan Sormani CSSp

We start each new day with Morning Prayer at 5:30 a.m., then a half hour of meditation, followed by Mass. We end the day with Night Prayer and Office of Readings at 8:00 p.m.

Throughout the day there are two classes given either by me or other confreres who are able to come one or two days a week from Monday to Friday. We focus the classes on the developments of the Spiritual Life: personal and community prayers, Religious Life, Community Life, the history of the Spiritans, and especially the Spiritan Rule of Life.

Twice a week we have Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, praying for vocations and benefactors. The novices also spend time doing manual labour and playing sports.

Each Saturday afternoon they divide into two groups visiting Thien Phuoc Centre, where they serve and care for challenged children; and Mai Hoa center, a home for HIV/AIDS patients. Here the novices share the Sunday gospel with children and organize different activities for them.



Nhien visiting children in one of the centers.



Fr Brandon and the novices.

The bridge called Thank You

Ayodele Ayeni CSSp

“**T**here is a time for every matter under heaven.”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

For me, it is time to say Thank You. After six years of studying at Dominican College, Ottawa, culminating the studies I began in Primary One, 1978, in Nigeria, I liken the successful defence of my thesis to a symphony. There is more to a symphony than its individual melodies. Likewise, there is more to education than its individual successes. It embraces each of them to produce the symphony called education.

I have a song — thanksgiving to the Holy Spirit who chose to become my friend, and whose love I try to respond to every day. Indeed, he grants gifts of wisdom and knowledge, joy and courage. He grants the gift of tongues — the language of faith, hope and charity. A big Thank You to the Holy Spirit!

I have a song — thanksgiving to my parents. As a child, I was their delight; as an adult, a dream come true. And for me, they are a paragon of parenthood: accomplished disciplinarians, luminaries of Christian life, star teachers and educators. Mom and Dad: ese popo!

I have a song — thanksgiving to Spiritans worldwide, but in particular, the members of the TransCanada Province. In the vagaries of an irreligious world, the Spiritan family has remained a beacon of light guiding and nudging me forward. The Quebec Spiritans paid my way through the junior seminary in Nigeria; the TransCanada Province has paid my way through doctoral studies. To you all, I say Thank You.

Thank You bridges the gap between the past and the present among those who will always remember their affiliations to a family that goes beyond them — the Spiritan family. Thank You warms the heart because some Spiritans who believe in their Congregation dare to dream.

Past, present and future

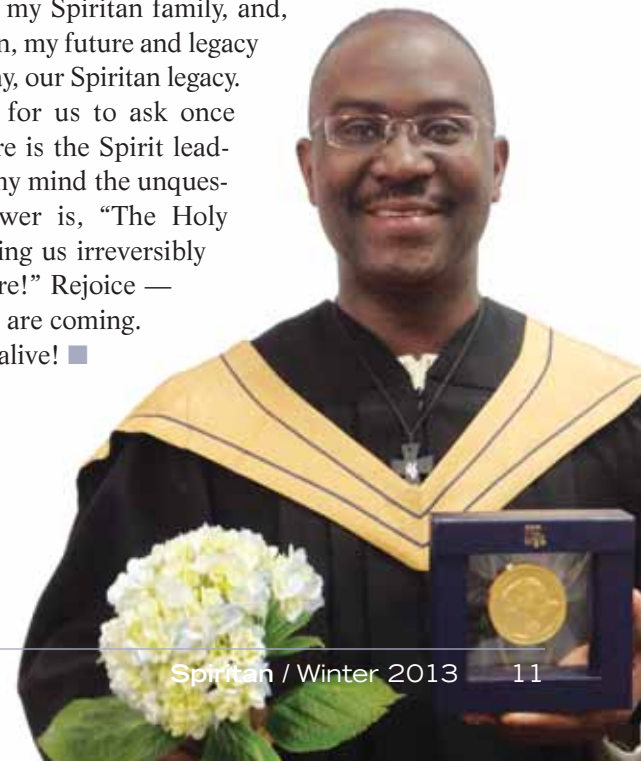
There is no future without a past. The bridge called Thank You takes seriously the idea that human beings are social animals who are interdependent and support each other. We all have predecessors, and by that same token, we anticipate having successors. All will not end with us.

Past, present and future are played out vividly in the family — the boy is the father of the man, as we say in English. Families care for each other: if they do nothing else for each other, at least they bury one another! But there are good things families do for each other: they share love, happiness, sorrow and dreams. It is like a relay — each person has his and her turn, his and her time.

Like genes, families are projected willy-nilly into the future. Some DNA may disappear for a while, only to reappear in the future. The Holy Spirit is no different: the only thing predictable about him is his unpredictability in maintaining goodness! The Spiritans too are only predictable to the degree that the Holy Spirit is mastered — an effort in futility. But one fact remains unassailable — the future is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit in spite of human frailty and pessimism.

To say Thank You is to acknowledge my dependence on and indebtedness to my predecessors. To say Thank You is to realize that I am part of a family, a Spiritan family. To say Thank You is to admit that there will be a future, with or without me; that whatever I do in the present either makes or mars the future of my Spiritan family, and, by implication, my future and legacy — I should say, our Spiritan legacy.

It is time for us to ask once again, “Where is the Spirit leading us?” To my mind the unquestionable answer is, “The Holy Spirit is leading us irreversibly into the future!” Rejoice — brighter days are coming. The Spirit is alive! ■



Two years after

A people always on their feet. Full of hope and steadfast in their faith, the country resembles a hive of activity which has been kicked, but which recovers its activity time and time again. Natural catastrophes have come one after another. Corruption has not gone away. Not all promises of aid have been fulfilled. Nevertheless, the Haitian people retain their dignity, remain combative and refuse to become discouraged.



the earthquake – A hive of activity

Franz Lichtlé CSSp

Last year I spent two weeks in Haiti. More than two years after the earthquake, I had imagined that on returning to this country where I had lived for thirteen years, I would find a ravaged country, a downtrodden people, children, women and men reduced to begging, in despair, discouraged, out of breath. Not at all. On the contrary, during my fifteen days in places particularly struck by various calamities, I found the same dignified, proud and forceful people I had left behind eleven years earlier.

In various conversations over those fifteen days, most of the talk dealt with topics such as dignity, responsibility, taking charge, reconstruction, projects, justice, human rights, mutual respect and fraternity. Yes, their needs were many, along with many urgent repairs to the damage done by the earthquake and the subsequent cyclone, Anne, a few months later, not to mention the cholera transmitted by foreign troops.

Sent as a backup to a country devastated by these scourges, the troops brought with them the scourge of cholera that claimed thousands of victims. It continues to haunt people's memories and to reappear here and there without warning.

Many questions were asked time and time again in the course of our discussions. Why? How? But the Haitian hunger to live enabled them to get over such issues. It showed itself in their energy to get involved in a welter of activities here, there and everywhere,

Reconstructing itself once more

Haiti resembles an ant heap that, if you kick it from time to time, still gets back to work — although in an apparently disordered manner. Things get moving all over the place, all geared to repairing, reordering, restoring, reorganizing. This country reconstructs itself to enable everyone to engage again



Haiti

in an activity that will keep them going until the next kick in the teeth — like storm Isaac last August and hurricane Sandy last October.

In the United States they re-established the New York stock exchange much more rapidly than the several months and years it will take to rebuild the roads and bridges swept away by the rains in the south of Haiti or in the Grand-Anse. Every kick leaves behind its imprint for up to ten years — as if to engrave in people's memories the stops and starts of their history.

Claims pile up as people demand to be the first beneficiaries of aid — often clumsily and unjustly distributed. This aid is available and visible in different ways, but is also aligned to its counterpart: corruption.

The Haitian people

But what sticks out a mile is the ingenuity of the people, often considered illiterate: their skill at getting out of a difficult situation, not always by means we would consider the best means, not always according to the western way of thought,

but with determination and faith in the future. That's where you discover the greatness of this people who have fought for centuries — not always successfully — but which is inscribed in their deepest identity as Haitians.

Haitian men and women value remaining in charge of their own destiny — even if that costs them dearly. Yes, we must be critical of their governments, of their political, economic and social structures that often fall short of their primary duty to serve, enhance, encourage, teach and care for their people. On one hand, the task is beyond them; on the other hand,



ambitions and thirst for power and money have not disappeared along with all their natural cataclysms.

It's not the great promises, more or less adhered to by one and all, "*pays amis*" — a country of friends, including its present leaders — that have given back to Haiti its dignity. Mutual help, small and large, has allowed one and all to attend to their basic needs and to overcome the crisis that continues to hold sway in this small country.

They appreciate overseas help and hope that we continue to sustain them one way or another. Their surprising faith,

their hope in God and their confidence in his grace and his promises can upset and disorient us, but their sense of being in God's hands can inspire our prayers.

Haitian men and women value
remaining in charge of their own destiny
— even if that costs them dearly.

They ask us to speak about Haiti, not as a beaten country, destroyed, unhappy and condemned, but as a country undergoing reconstruction, getting back on its own two feet, drawing from the depth of its inner being — from its history and its imagination — an extraordinary power which enables it to exist and to be one of the worthy and respected countries of our planet.

Haiti is beautiful. Haiti is praiseworthy. Haiti is great. ■

Article and photos courtesy of *Pentecôte sur le Monde*.





The story of an attic

Vincent O'Toole CSSp

“My address is c/o M. Patriarcha, Vicolo del Pinaco 31, Roma.”

This was to be the address of Francis Libermann in 1840. Although it sounds good, in fact it was a couple of tiny attics on top of a high building, the home of pigeons. The roof was just tiles and it was impossible to stand upright. Libermann was happy with them and rented them both for an écu a month.

Libermann had come to Rome to get approval from the Vatican for a new missionary religious family. Its purpose was to go to Africa where most people lived in deplorable conditions. Slavery had just been abolished, but the plight of the people in the colonies was worse than ever. Libermann and a few companions were determined to do something to help.

Nearly everyone told Libermann that he hadn't a chance: he was an epileptic and so barred from the priesthood: “Almost everyone I spoke to about my plans disapproved of them.” He received no encouragement at all. Even good, virtuous and learned people harboured suspicions about his motivation. The companion who came with him from Paris decided they were getting nowhere and went home to his family. He was the one who paid their expenses, so the impecunious Libermann moved into the attic.

A long wait

There he patiently waited for the will of God to become evident. It was a long wait. Life must have been very hard for Francis, living in a tiny room that was like a furnace in



Above: Fr. Francis Libermann's attic re-erected atop the French Spiritan Seminary in Rome. Facing page: The attic in its final resting place at the Spiritan General House in Rome.

summer and a fridge in winter. However, his landlady, Senora Patriarcha, never heard him complain. When Brother Thomas Mabit was in Rome in 1859, after the death of Libermann, she told him that in order to survive he used to go to the market and buy a few vegetables and when he ran out of money — which was a frequent occurrence — he would join the poor people at the doors of convents to beg for some food.

Fr Mabut also relates that while Libermann was patiently waiting for news from the Vatican, the children of the family told him that he used to teach them the catechism and how to pray. The whole Patriarcha family were convinced that Francis was a saint and referred to him as “Il Santo.”

Writing a “provisional rule”

During the long wait for news from the Vatican, Libermann set about writing a “provisional rule” for the proposed missionary family. He had never done anything remotely like that before, so he sought advice from friends who had some experience in that area. But it was not easy.

He put all his trust in Our Blessed Lady. He decided to consecrate the work to the Holy Heart of Mary. He wrote, “I sometimes came up against great difficulties, so I would rush to one of my favourite churches.”

One of these was the church of St Augustine, just round the corner from where he was living and working in his attic. Inside there was a statue of Mary called the Madonna del Parto (the Madonna of Childbirth), much loved to this day by Roman women waiting for the birth of their child. Libermann frequently prayed in front of this statue because *“I could be sure that when I got home and took up my pen again, all the difficulties would evaporate. This never failed to work.”*

Meanwhile Vatican officials began to realize that this young seminarian was a rather special person. At the same time, his epileptic fits were becoming less violent and less frequent, so when the coadjutor bishop of Strasbourg agreed to ordain him

a priest, Libermann was encouraged to continue with his project. He finally vacated his attic in early January 1841.

In the 1930s all the houses around the famous Piazza Navona in central Rome were to be demolished to make way for a large road. The attic was perched on top of 31 Vicolo del Pinaco. When the Spiritan students at the French Seminary heard about this, they sprang into action and got permission to dismantle the attic, and re-erect it on top of the Seminary. The Seminary was run by the Holy Ghost Fathers on behalf of the bishops of France. Spiritans coming to Rome from all over the world would visit the attic, now a shrine. There they were delighted to sit and pray in what was the cradle of Libermann's foundation of the Holy Heart of Mary.

Linking past and future

In 2010, the Spiritans handed over the administration of the seminary to the bishops of France. Before leaving they decided to dismantle the attic once more and transfer it to the Spiritan General House on the top of Monte Mario overlooking Rome and the basilica of St Peter. It was no easy task as great care had to be taken of the now fragile materials and exact measurements had to be made.

The newly renovated headquarters welcomed the arrival of the attic, with its strong associations with our roots, as it was a fitting climax that linked our past with our future. Cardinal Robert Sarah, former archbishop of Conakry in Guinea, welcomed and blessed the attic to what must surely be its final resting place.

Visiting Spiritans can now spend some time in it, thanking God for all his blessings and asking Father Libermann to continue to guide us into an unknown future with the same trust and courage that he possessed in abundance. Those who complain about banging their heads on the low beams get no sympathy. Libermann surely spent a whole year doing the same. ■

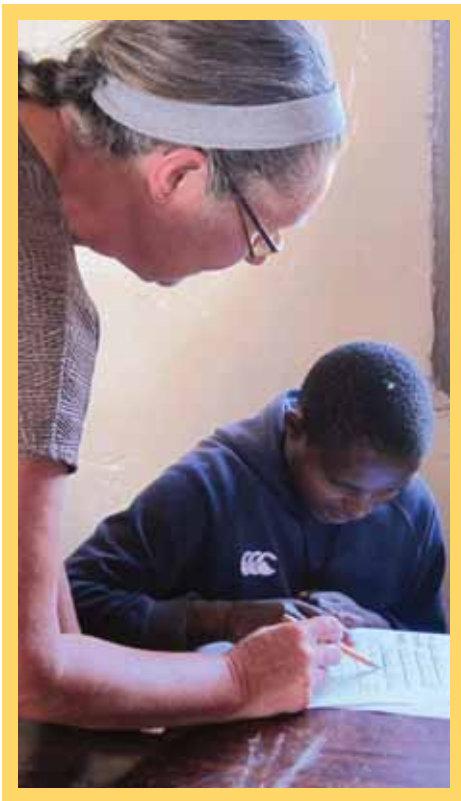
Courtesy of *Missionwide*, Spring 2012



Alphonse Gilbert CSSp and Paul McAuley CSSp visit the attic.

Plunging in... moving with... joining the dance

Joyce de Gooijer,
Director of VICS



“**T**he only way to make sense out of change is to plunge into it, move with it, and join the dance.”
Alan Wilson Watts

This quote certainly describes how I’m feeling as the new director of Volunteer International Christian Service. VICS, a lay volunteer mission organization, was started by the Canadian Spiritan priests 42 years ago. They have chosen to continue

their support and involvement in VICS with one major change — handing the directorship over to a lay person — me! My name is Joyce de Gooijer and though I plunged into the position in January this year, I joined the VICS dance many years ago.

It started almost 27 years ago. My husband, John, and I were newly married. We traveled to Gambia, West Africa, to visit Karen, a friend of John’s, volunteering with CUSO.

While there, she had met and married another volunteer, Brian, working with an organization we never knew existed. You guessed it — the organization was VICS! That was that — or so we thought — until they sent a letter telling us of a posting in Kenya with VICS — and it was for a couple. Now, wouldn't that be something we'd want to consider?

Kenya

John had always talked about going to Africa and I thought this would be a great opportunity. As is often the case, I got all excited and suggested we apply. Going with my philosophy of, "If it's meant to happen — it will," we submitted an application. Well, wouldn't you know it, we DID hear from VICS — first from MaryBelle Denis, the VICS representative in Saskatoon and then from Dermot Doran, the VICS director. At every stage, "if it's meant to happen" seemed to happen and before we knew it we were at a VICS orientation in Toronto and on our way to Kenya.

Kiribati

I believe that life experiences prepare us for whatever is coming next in our lives. Twenty years of teaching and principal experiences in rural Saskatchewan (most recently in the Watson and Drake areas), and completing a Masters Program in Educational Administration certainly gave me a good skill base. In Kenya, I taught Math and Home Economics to high school students. In Kiribati I expected to teach again, but I became a teaching-principal at St. Joseph's College, a 400-student boarding school. Sr. Rotee, the woman I called my earthly guardian angel, kept me on track and helped me through all my cultural faux-pas.

Tanzania

Who would have thought that simultaneously being a learning resource room teacher, classroom teacher and principal in Saskatchewan would give me skills needed to teach at Olkokola Vocational School in Tanzania? John volunteered as administrator for Flying Medical Service, an organization started 30 years ago by Pat Patten, a Spiritan priest. It took me a few months to find my niche and work out exactly what I could do. After learning that some students could speak their national language, Swahili, but had never learned to read and write it, I received permission from Zablon, the school principal, to work with them. My great joy came from

teaching twelve students between the ages of 13 and 56 to read and write words specific to their personal lives and tailoring class.

More than that, though, was the emotional connection I made with the students and what I learned from them. Each

A posting in Kenya with VICS — and it was for a couple. Now, wouldn't that be something we'd want to consider?

student was dealing with a specific disability. How easy for me — an able-bodied person — to talk about trying something new and overcoming difficulties. How humbling for me

to experience their inner strength. Kristina was visually impaired, John had brittle bone disease, Teresia, our 56-year-old 'bibi' (grandmother) was learning to live with an amputated foot, and Loitajho had wrist contractures. Nothing stopped them.

Imagine this: I pushing our student, John, his wheelchair tipped backward, front wheel in the air, he making airplane sounds and yelling, "EH! MREMBO!" ("Hey! Beautiful!") to young women we passed. What a change from the young man who, when he first arrived, had

not experienced friendship, would hide and refuse to talk to anyone. How could I not learn about enjoying life?

Planting roots, getting uprooted

Being a railroader's kid, home is always where I am living. Establishing roots quickly has been a blessing and a challenge. John's and my married life has evolved into one or both of us planting roots or being uprooted. VICS has certainly played a role in that pattern! Our lives have unfolded in 10-year increments. Volunteer in Kenya — work for 10 years; volunteer in Kiribati — work for 10 years; Volunteer in Tanzania — work at the VICS office!

Now, as my journey with VICS continues, I plunge in, move with and am part of the VICS dance in a new way; continuing to respect the program and its philosophies within the context of change and moving forward. What an exciting place to be! ■



Joyce de Gooijer (centre) with the two "bibis" (grandmothers) at the Olkokola Vocational School in Tanzania, Teresia (left) and Elizabeth (right).

The ragtag road-beaters of Cameroon

Ellen Einterz

VICS Volunteer, Kolofata, Cameroon



To drive from Kolofata to Maroua, the regional capital of the Far North, you have first to take a 20-mile-long rutted dirt road to a town called Mara. The next 47 miles between Mara and Maroua are paved, but after countless years of neglect, what used to be a road consists mostly of macadam connecting craterous, ragged-rimmed potholes. Tar has broken off in clumps along the edges of the asphalt, and the gravel shoulders have ended, so in many places if you have the misfortune to slip off the road, you slip all the way down a steep embankment.

There is a toll booth between Mara and Maroua, and it costs a dollar to pass, so a round trip costs two dollars, and given the thousands of cars that use the road every week, the Ministry of Transportation cannot be short of cash to make repairs. But the Ministry of Transportation does not do that, so local boys along the road take up the slack.

Each afternoon after school, which is to say after school for those among them who go to school, they tool up with broken buckets and bowls and scraps of sheet metal, and they gather on either side of the road and throw shovelfuls of dirt into the worst of the potholes. To level the lumps they beat the dirt down with stout sticks. From half a mile or more away you know when you are coming up to a group of road-beaters because the air all around them fills with dust and from that far off you can see the gritty cloud hugging the ground.

The boys themselves are clad in rags where clad at all, and

the dust turns them a grayish white from head to toe. When they spot your vehicle in the distance rolling towards them, they make a great show of shoveling for all they're worth, and then as you approach, they stop their labour and begin jumping up and down, waving their arms and shouting: *A hundred francs to fix your road! Please sir! We are working for you! A Tangul bottle please! Look, see! We are helping you here! A hundred francs, sir!*

Tangul is a Cameroonian brand of bottled water, and while the boys would be glad to receive a hundred francs — twenty cents — they would be just as glad if you threw them an empty plastic water bottle from your window. They will fill it with their own water and carry it to school or to the field or pasture or to the forest where they go to hunt small birds with slingshots.

If you throw nothing at all, they sigh and chalk it up to The Way of the World. They retreat, settle back down on their haunches, squint off towards the horizon, watch and wait. Another car or truck or taxi van will appear soon enough, they know, and maybe with that one — or if not that one maybe the one after that — or else the next one again ... some treasure will be theirs.

We feel a fondness for these boys, these ragtag bands of road-beaters, for, like them, we spend our days filling gaps, raising dust, doing our best with whatever we have to level the path and smooth the way. ■

Through the long arc of their history in the United States, it is a simple fact that women religious built the church. We wouldn't have the Catholic school system without them. We wouldn't have a hospital system without them. We wouldn't today have a Catholic presence in many of the worst parts of our cities without them. We wouldn't have ministry to the displaced, unwanted and hurting without them. In many cases we wouldn't have any ministries or education programs in our parishes or dioceses without them. And in some of the priest-poor sections of the country, we wouldn't have parishes without them.

Tom Roberts,
National Catholic Reporter



A candle loses nothing
by lighting another candle.

I always liked that the name
of my religion (Catholic) was
also an adjective meaning
all-embracing.

Maureen Dowd, *New York Times*

We do not ask who people are
before we offer them help.
We help because they are
human beings like us.

Dalai Lama



... the church doesn't exist for itself, but to change the world, which means that if its message is to penetrate the various realms of culture — medicine, law, the academy, politics, the economy and so on — it's either going to be carried by the laity, or not at all.

John Allen

Laval House moves to a new address



The Old

Chapel exterior
121 Victorial Park Ave., Toronto
1996-2013



The New

Front and back
15 Truman Rd., Toronto
Opened 2013



The Blessing



Fr Frank McCabe — our most senior Senior Citizen — cuts the blessing cake.



Fr Neal Shank and Fr Bob Colburn at the chapel blessing.



Spiritan seminarian Robert di Nardo at the celebration dinner.

Father Alex Osei to head the Pontifical Missions of Canada



It is with great delight that I announce the appointment of Father Alex Osei as the new National Director of the Pontifical Mission Societies in English Canada. This is an official Vatican appointment made by the Cardinal in charge of the Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples.

Cardinal Collins recommended the Spiritans as one of three Congregations in Canada to put forward a name for this recently vacated position. Father Alex's name was submitted to Rome by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops as one of the three names. We received word of his appointment on January 18, 2013.

Congratulations to Father Alex and please know Alex that you have our prayers and support in your new endeavors.

Fr Bob Colburn CSSp, Provincial Superior

Father Francis Folleh becomes a Canadian Citizen

Congratulations to Fr Francis on becoming a Canadian citizen.

Francis was born and grew up in Sierra Leone, West Africa. After his ordination he was in turn Vocation Director in his own country, and Community Bursar at the Spiritan Institute School of Theology in Nigeria. After coming to Canada in 2007 he worked in three different parishes dedicated to St Joseph:

in Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, at the Basilica in Edmonton and now in West Hill, Ontario. In between he was pastor of St Vital Parish, Beaumont, Alberta. Last summer he was elected the TransCanada representative to the Spiritan General Chapter in Bagamoyo, Tanzania.



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A missionary talks to God

You have sent me to the peoples of the world
— but not as I had figured it out.

I was going over there to teach
because I was a priest, because I was a white man —
I had all the solutions in my head.

I had to start learning all over.
To speak of Christ, I had to borrow the words
to tell Africans, poor in resources, but
rich in wisdom, what Christ would have told them.

I had to accept to be one
that could be done away with easily
and whose departure would not cause any problems.
I have been blessed a hundredfold
because others, growing in Christ,
have become my masters.
Because from now on it is their community
that is alive
and not the one I had imagined.

As a missionary I had gone to transplant.
Thanks to you I have just sowed.
I see the harvest coming.
It will be a young Church of young nations.
I don't want to miss out on what it will
create on its own.

Lord, thanks
for having opened new horizons for me.

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Mission, Missionaries of Africa, Quebec

